THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS'

MILLENNIAL STAR.

[ESTABLISHED 1840.]

"For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for?" (DEUT. 4: 7).

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LOYALTY TO CHRIST.

THE foundational principle and the most widely taught doctrine of "Mormonism," is loyalty to Christ. This fact, in and of itself is an all-sufficient answer to the marked advancement, both in numbers and in spiritual enlightment, of the Latter-day Saints. We maintain that to believe the gospel means that we will live it; to live it involves obedience—a true observance of all the laws laid down by Christ, whether great or small, ethical or spiritual, simple or complex. We teach further, that the spiritual guide of the people of the Lord always has been and always will be revelation. Modern Christendom has not believed in revelation for centuries, and perhaps this fact alone did much to bring on the dark ages. Finally, after a prolonged spiritual famine, great reformers arose and did what they could to obliterate the stains of the apostasy, to lift the veil which had been thrown over the eyes of the Christian world, and as a result the curse of schisms appeared, creeds were formed, dogmas introduced, and sects rapidly multiplied.

A staunch Roman Catholic worshipper recently asked the following question: "Since all the sects of modern Protestant Christendom are simply protesting against Roman Catholicism, why can they not offer each other a brotherly hand, and worship peacefully in each others' churches?" Truly an enigmatical query at first thought. But are they "simply protesting against Roman Catholicism?" Their first protest was made against the methods of the Roman Church, but that spirit of protesting seemed to grow on them, and they began to protest against each other's methods, and from this fact, the blight of schisms took nourishment. From the point of view of the Roman adherent, all this trouble may be the result of a lack of spiritual development, or of a strong need of ethical culture, or of a failure to recognize divine authority in

modern religions teachings, or of a laxity in general principles, or a dozen other reasons of a similar nature. Schisms is the result; let us seek the cause.

Before endeavoring to solve this modern mystery, let us learn from the experience of one who has met and, temporarily, at least, mastered a similar condition. This person was none other than the Apostle Paul. While he was at Philippi he received news concerning certain divisions among the Corinthian saints. Some were professing to be of Cephas, others of Paul himself, others of Apollos, and so forth. In this day we have a striking analogy to this condition. Some profess to be of Luther, some of Calvin, some of Swedenborg, some of Wesley, etc. Paul boldly denounced such division, for in his day, as in ours, it simply engendered strife and unrest among the people, when they should be united. "Carnal" is the word he applied to their nature; "spiritual" was far above their unworthiness. He impressed upon their minds the fact that Peter and Apollos and others were simply the instruments by which they were brought to Christ, "for other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (I. Cor. 3: 11). It mattered not who brought them to Christ, since all the apostles were preaching the same gospel; the essential feature was, in Paul's own words, that Christ had been preached to them and they had received Him, and now "ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's" (I. Cor. 3: 23). You are not part Paul's and part Peter's, but you are all Christ's. To paraphrase somewhat, Paul's message was: Since the wisdom of men is foolishness unto God, let no man glory in men and follow them in their carnal weakness, but stand loyal to Christ who is our firm and sure foundation.

It would be impossible to-day to unite the numerous sects of Christendom by constructing a creed to meet the demands of all. To do so would mean to introduce a great amount of error and possibly eliminate some truth. This, however, is a question that has been considered to some extent with a view to uniting a multiplicity of sects in so-called Christendom. It will be recognized instantly that it is only too natural for man to be opposite to some extent, which would make it impossible for one universal man-made creed to satisfy all. Hinging on this fact is much of the trouble. Men are loyal to this creed and that creed, but they are not, in the full sense of the word, loyal to Christ. To the query above then, we answer: Man lacks spirituality; his nature is yet unrefined—carnal; he has permitted the momentary pleasures of this mortal life to crush out all desire for spiritual happiness, and he has not appreciated the fact that loyalty to Christ—not to creed—will be the most efficient means of uniting Christendom and of abolishing the shameful dissension and strife that exists to-day.

Let us now consider what loyalty to Christ involves. It means, first of all, loyalty to His teachings and obedience to His commands.

It means that nothing short of the life He led will suit our ideal. It means now that He has shown us the possibility of living a perfect life, that we should strive to be "perfect, even as our Father which is in heaven is perfect."

The question now arises: What were His teachings? At a recent meeting which the writer was invited to attend, the preacher took for his text I. Timothy 1: 3, "As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, * * * that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine." Naturally enough, he proceeded to exalt the teachings of the sect he represented as the correct doctrine. In this brief article we shall let the Bible speak for itself and see if we cannot find just what principles and doctrines Jesus and the apostles taught as being essential to our salvation. We must bear in mind that there is but one gospel, one plan taught by the Savior, for Paul writes: "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1: 8). With care and precision let us feel our way, lest we be found guilty of teaching or believing other doctrines than those taught by the Savior. Mark records: "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; as it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." This great fore-runner baptized many from the land of Judea and from Jerusalem, teaching them to have faith on One who should follow, who was preferred before him, and who should complete their baptism with fire and with the Holy Ghost. This according to Mark 1: 1-8. Matthew records the same beginning, saying that all the people in the region of the Jordan "were baptized of him, * * * confessing their sins" (3: 1-6). The other two evangelists are equally agreed upon this point (Luke 3: 2, 3, and John 1: 26-28). John the Baptist had been sent to declare the coming of the Messiah, and had been instructed to baptize with water for the remission of sins. Shortly after, the Savior, the author of these instructions, came and applied unto John for baptism. The very Son of God humbled Himself and was baptized, for He declared "it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matt. 3: 13-16; Mark 1: 9, 10; Luke 3: 21, 22; John 1: 32, 33). How much more urgent that we who need a remission of sins should be baptized of water and of the Spirit!

Christ now commenced His active ministry. He went about through the land calling His disciples after Him, and performing many works of righteousness. In His journeyings, the Savior attracted the attention of a certain one, Nicodemus, a great and good man among the Jews, and this man recognized something of the supernatural in Christ. He came quietly to the Savior one night

that He might talk with Him and gain a knowledge of His mission, and so forth. In the course of the brief conversation which followed, Christ made the following statement: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." What strange doctrine is this? thought Nicodemus. Does He mean to say that I, a matured man, can be born again? And he asked the Savior the meaning of the words. The reply was, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. * * * Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again" (John 3: 1-7). Our natural conclusion here must be that outside the kingdom of God there is no full salvation, and "he that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber" (John 10: 1); therefore baptism of water and of the Spirit is the door of adoption into the kingdom of God, and the means by which we receive a remission of sins.

There are those in Christendom to-day who believe that when Christ, in the climax of His agony, uttered the words, "It is finished," there was no further need of baptism or of other works in the gospel. The work was finished, salvation came to those who merely professed Christ. Let us look into this matter. Three days after His death—after He had cried, "It is finished"—He arose from the dead, made Himself known on several occasions, and finally, before His ascension into heaven, He solemnly spoke unto His apostles, saying: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28: 18-20); and again, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not (and as a result is not baptized) shall be damned" (Mark 16: 16). Apparently faith was still an essential factor, and obedience to the teachings of Christ was enjoined, which would involve repentance, and upon baptism hinges our entrance into the kingdom of God.

After the ascension of Christ, the Holy Ghost was made manifest unto the apostles, who spoke in divers tongues and prophesied. In answer to the query brought forth by the convincing sermon delivered on this pentecostal occasion, Peter admonished the people to "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2: 38). Even Paul, the great apostle to the gentiles, was baptized after Christ had said, "It is finished." The Philippian jailer (Acts 16: 29-33), the Egyptian eunuch (Acts 8: 38, 39), the men of Ephesus (Acts 19: 1-6), the converts in Samaria (Acts 8: 12-17), several thousand souls on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2: 41), and others that might be mentioned, were all baptized after the crucifixion of the Savior. Hence the

work was not all finished, nor was there any scheme concocted whereby a verbal admission of belief in Jesus Christ would be sufficient. We have learned that the preaching of baptism unto repentance for the remission of sins was "the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ." Thirty odd years later the writer to the Hebrew saints urges them "on unto perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment" (Heb. 6: 1, 2). These, then, are recognized in holy writ as the first and foundational principles of the gospel of Christ.

True, we read that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life;" but what does belief involve? It would be hypocritical to say that we believe in Christ; that we place our confidence in Him, if we do not truly love Him. Love implies duty; duty implies action. If we love Christ we will keep His commandments (John 14: 12), and if we keep His commandments we shall know Him (I. John 2: 3). "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (I. John 2: 4). We need have no scruples as to what the true doctrine is, nor what His commandments were. The words of the fore-runner of Christ, and the last injuction of the Savior before His final ascension, the teachings of His apostles after His ascension and the message of the Latter-day Saints in this day, all sound the same gospel key-note: Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, repent of your sins and be baptized that they may be remitted, and have the Holy Ghost bestowed upon you as a guide and a teacher in all truth.

When this is done, however, our work in the gospel has not ended; it has just begun. We have received the new birth and are now starting out on a new life with renewed vigor and a determination to do good. Perfection is our goal. We strive to be humble in spirit, that we may inherit the kingdom of heaven; to be meek, that we may inherit the earth; to be pure in heart, that we may see God. Can belief alone grant us these privileges? Could baptism without a repentant spirit, make these blessings accessible? Could any single ordinance or group of ordinances, independent of the rest, give us an assurance of the riches of eternity? No, not according to scripture and reason.

In Christendom to-day we find various churches specializing on some gift or doctrine, and that one strong point is the pivot of the whole of their faith. Where is the sectarian church which possesses all the strong points and doctrines and the essential principles of life and salvation? A hundred years ago no church of this character was to be found upon the face of the earth. All that could be found was a fragment here and a part there, but nowhere was the whole. Creeds had taken the place of the Bible,

to a large extent, and men had attached themselves to these uninspired creations of men, instead of anchoring their souls to the Omnipotent Christ. They professed Christ, but were loyal to man-made religions in the form of creeds. The message of the Latter-day Saints is that they have the divine gospel, which embraces all the doctrines of Christ, which teaches loyalty to Christ, and which offers no creed other than the revealed word of God. We ask no man to take our word for what we claim, but we simply bear testimony to the truthfulness of our message, and leave it to them to seek a witness of its truthfulness from God.

The schisms of the day are a testimony of the unstable conditions in the Christian faith; a testimony to the fact that men are losing their hold on religion, and that religion is losing its place in the hearts of men. The increase in agnosticism and atheism is a proof of a lack of sincerity in religion and of disloyalty to Christ. Conclude we, then, that if the creeds were abolished, and the Bible was read with a prayerful, understanding heart, and if men were all of Christ and not of various reformers, the world would come nearer perfection that it has ever been before.

Accrington. CLYDE C. EDMONDS.

BE TOLERANT.

WHILE tracting in the town of Accrington a few weeks ago, I met a Unitarian minister, who invited me to his home. In the course of our conversation I was asked why I called on such as he. I replied, "To compare what we each have to teach, and if you have something better to offer than I have, I am willing to receive it; for a religion that cannot stand comparison with others favorably, is not worth having." He said, in turn, "That is my belief also, and since you are so tolerant, I will give you an opportunity to speak to my adult class on some Sunday morning, and your subject must be, 'Why you are a Latter-day Saint.'" This I have done on two occasions. The unusual subject to be treated brought out many people. It gave me a good opportunity to explain what the Latter-day Saints believe, and also to bear my testimony to them. A few questions were asked and answered to their satisfaction. As a result, one Book of Mormon was sold, and several small pamphlets were distributed.

On Sunday, December 14th, 1913, Brother Benjamin R. Birchall, a local elder, once a Methodist minister, also lectured to a Primitive Methodist adult class on the subject, "Is baptism essential to salvation?" There was a large attendance, and every one present had a Bible in hand, and all statements made by Brother Birchall were proved by the scriptures. Many questions were asked and answered. As a result, the chairman of the class finally arose and said, "Gentlemen, it seems strange that all these years we have

read the Bible, and yet have been led to misunderstand it. If we believe the Bible, we must believe that baptism is essential to salvation."

I was then asked to speak to them a few minutes, and comment on what had been said. A very good feeling prevailed among all present, and they thanked Brother Birchall for his services. They assured us they would like the opportunity of having us speak again to them sometime. I feel that we should be tolerant, for the spirit we manifest will most likely be reciprocated. Truth once spoken will never die; but will rather take root in the friends we make.

Accrington. NIELS J. ANDERSON.

OPTIMISM.

FEW of the gifts of God will do more towards the perfection and happiness of mankind than will the proper exercise of the spirit of optimism. It enables the possessor to look beyond the cloud of besetting misfortune and trouble and behold in thought the magnificent triumph of God's plans. To him no woes and snares of life come as death-blows to ambition; the gospel of Christ does not appear a fable, nor the love of God a myth. The optimist achieves success in face of opposition, which to one less hopeful than he spells ultimate failure. The cheer emanating from the kindly words and actions of the former, reminds one of the flower, which, although it may grow on the rocky hillside or the desert sands, continues to pour forth its sweet perfume into the surrounding air, ever testifying to the existence of its Creator, and the excellence of His plans.

These examples set before one will generally influence him, however hardened he may have become, and cause him to reflect upon his duty to his fellowmen. We are all bound to humanity by indissoluble ties, and by lightening the load of one of our companions, or by assisting some weaker associate to see the beauty of the present world, we benefit ourselves, besides rendering to a fellowman a service that will make our lives of some worth. With such truths before us, how great should be our endeavor to foster the growth of so valuable a gift. Without the prevailing hope for the best that characterized their lives, Napoleon, Lincoln and Newton would have died unnoticed. On the other hand, many who are groveling in the common ruts, could rise to noble heights by carefully wielding this fine, but mighty power, so conspicuous in the "drama of life."

Birmingham. DAVID H. CANNON.

USEFULNESS is the rent we are asked to pay for rooms on earth. Some of us are heavily in debt.

THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS' MILLENNIAL STAR.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 1914.

EDITORIAL.

CONCERNING GOD'S JUSTICE AND MERCY.

When Abraham dwelt in the plains of Mamre, there visited him on a certain occasion three men, whom he entertained with lavish hospitality. One of his guests was the Lord Himself, or the Jehovah of the Old Testament. Upon the departure of the visitors they took their course toward Sodom and Gomorrah—cities of the Dead Sea plains; and Abraham accompanied them in the first portion of their journey. The Lord was so highly pleased with his virtue and fidelity that, it appears, he confided to him His purpose to destroy those wicked cities; whereupon Abraham, who apparently did not believe that all the people who dwelt in them were corrupt, but rather that a few of them, at least, were righteous, and, therefore, should not be condemned to sudden destruction, drew near to the Lord and said: "Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. 18: 23-25).

The feelings which prompted Abraham to ask these questions, were very natural to the heart of one whose character was so fully in harmony with that of the Lord Himself, that he was called the "friend" of God; and all other righteous persons Abraham could not fail to regard as the friends of God also; and, consequently, he could not perceive any justice in overwhelming them in a common ruin with the Lord's enemies. From his point of view a great wrong would thus be be committed; and so deeply did he sense this fact, that he was unable to restrain himself from giving expression to his feelings. The case was one that involved the principle of justice, and he did not hesitate to remind the Lord of that fact, as becomes apparent in his question, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Now, if the Lord's purpose to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah had been carried out under the expected condition which occasioned so much distress of mind to Abraham, it certainly does appear that a charge of wrong-doing could be sustained against Him who should cause such an indiscriminate destruction of their people. What actually did occur, however, is reserved for later remarks.

Turning our attention now to matters which concern us very directly, we find that questions of like import to those which Abraham proposed, are agitating the minds of great numbers of our fellowmen in these days. They witness the calamities which now befall man so frequently, when moral and religious people are swallowed up in a common ruin with the depraved and the ungodly, and a feeling is engendered in their hearts that the Lord is not awarding even-handed justice to all parties. As one result their hearts become hardened against him. Failing to accept and be governed by certain truths which the revelations of God make known either by the spoken word or by example; they do not have sufficient light to enable them to form a correct judgment respecting some of God's dealings with our race; and hence, viewing the character of the Almighty from a wrong point of view, multitudes are driven into infidelity and atheism, or, at least, find it impossible to love a Being who seems to them to be a creature of injustice, vengeance and wrath, rather than a God of mercy and love. It has been charged that the God of the Jews was a monster, possessing not even the common instincts and kindlier feelings of frail humanity. This sentiment is becoming widespread in our times respecting our Father in heaven; whom the scriptures command us to love and obey because of His beneficence to mankind in general; but especially on account of His mercy, longsuffering and care for His obedient children. It appears, therefore, that the views of many of the people now living and those of the scriptures respecting God's character, are greatly at variance, and the purpose of these remarks is to show that the course which the Almighty has pursued in His dealings with mankind, does sustain His scriptural character for justice and mercy. In pursuance of this purpose we shall not rest the case principally upon quotations from scripture; but rather cite instances in which it is very evident that the Lord, in executing His judgments among men, does make a difference between the righteous and the wicked; and that a way of escape is made for the former through compliance with His commandments and warning voice.

The first example that naturally suggests itself to our minds, is connected with the deluge. At that time the whole world, with but few exceptions, had become so wicked that "It repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart" (Gen. 6: 6). The cause which gave rise to these thoughts is recorded in the preceding verse which reads, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." When the Lord made known to Noah His purpose to bring destruction upon the antediluvian world, He said, "The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth" (Gen. 6: 13). The wickedness which then prevailed among men was certainly of

the most abominable character. Their deeds were corrupt. The earth was full of violence, and the thoughts of the people were of evil and of evil only. These conditions of wickedness provoked the Lord to the last degree, even beyond endurance. Never before nor since did He have such provocation for the display of world-wide, righteous anger and wrath as on that occasion. This is a point which should be kept constantly in view. But notwithstanding the greatness of the provocation, and in the midst of wrathful and well-nigh universal destruction, He did remember justice and mercy. Among the wicked multitudes there was a little company of righteous persons, and the eyes of the Lord were upon them always, and His protecting care was extended to them for their salvation. To destroy them was far from His thoughts: nor did he let the matter rest with this negative sort of interest in their welfare, as though allowing them a chance of escape, if they, themselves, could make provision for their own safety; but He took such a deep interest in their preservation that He gave Noah detailed instructions as to the means which he should employ in order to put himself beyond the reach of danger. When Noah and his family had complied with these instructions, their lives were just as safe as though no flood had occurred. The ark of safety which had been built under the Lord's instructions was entered. They had entrusted their all to Him, and we shrink from the thought that He could betray them, either in the last or in the first stages of the event. Noah and his family were saved by the mercy of God, and by His personal efforts in their behalf.

We are now ready to resume remarks concerning Sodom and Gomorrah, and the record of Abraham's intercession in their behalf. This patriarch, it appears, had an idea that instead of the wickedness of some men being made a justification for the punishment of the righteous indiscriminately with the ungodly, in times when great judgments of the Lord were abroad in the earth, He should rather proceed on the principle that the righteousness of the few should serve as a shield and protection, on such occasions, to the wicked who dwelt among them. Here we certainly have an interesting point of view from which to study the question in hand; and a little reflection will manifest that it is the proper one; and as thus presented to us, the maxim of law that it is better to let many guilty men escape than to punish one innocent person, is made applicable. To deprive a loyal citizen of property just because the government is in proceedings confiscating the holdings of rebels, is not sound policy by any means. To line up a lot of murderers and traitors to be shot down as they deserve, and then mix in with them a few law-abiding citizens, whose devotion to the government and the lawful authorities has been proven on many occasions, and make them share the same fate, just because there is power to do so, would be unjust in the highest degree; and should any of our civil or military authorities be guilty of

such injustice, the forfeiture of their own lives would make but slight atonement for their crime. That is just the way the matter looks to us; and who can show a difference in principle between justice in man and justice in God? The only means at our command for understanding at all what justice in God is, is by studying what it is in ourselves. There are not two kinds of justice—one human and another Divine of which we know nothing; and so we say that should He destroy His true saints with the ungodly by His judgments, He would not deserve to exist. No such God does exist. The order of the universe; the harmony everywhere apparent in it; the exquisite adaptation of means to secure ends; and His implanting within us a sense of justice, all attest that in the administration of the affairs of this natural world, there is a predominant, unchangeable principle of right in force. Should the principles of wrong get into the order of the universe, it would go to smash without warning. Now, He who has founded it without a wrong of any kind in it, must be a God of right principles and that of justice among them; and we protest against the iniquity of charging Him with lining up the wicked and the righteous together, and executing them with one blow. It is horrible to think of it, and the God of the Bible never did such an act, and never will.

But we must return now to the record in Genesis, and notice particularly how Abraham pleaded with the Lord that the righteous should become a shield and a protection for the wicked. Having, as already observed, proposed that those wicked cities should be spared for the sake of fifty righteous persons, and receiving an assurance that they should not be destroyed, if that small number could be found in them, he grows bolder, and a more worthy appreciation of God's mercies towards His saints and even towards the wicked takes hold of his mind, and he then further pleads with the Lord as follows: "Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes: Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for lack of five? And he said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy it. And he spake unto him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And he said, I will not do it for forty's sake. And he said unto him, Oh, let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Peradventure there shall be thirty found there. And he said, I will not do it, if I find thirty there. And he said, Behold, now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord: Peradventure there shall be found twenty there. And he said, I will not destroy it for twenty's sake. And he said, Oh, let not the Lord be angry, and I speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake."

From these records, it is perceived that Abraham, who certainly was a righteous man, was extremely slow in forming a worthy

estimate of God's character for mercy, when exercised toward His saints; and it is not at all surprising, therefore, that wicked men deny this attribute to Him. The Lord's forbearance in this case is very manifest from the fact that He did not become angry with His servant as his repeated intercessions followed one another. He seemed to think that the Lord was indifferent to the destruction of a few acceptably righteous persons when chastizing the wicked, and, provided the proportion of the former was not very large, the work of vengeance and destruction might go on with the approval of the Almighty. But it seems that the Lord finally, by manifesting somewhat fully His merciful disposition, shamed Abraham into silence, and he returned to his home; the Lord also going about His business, which next related to the preservation of the righteous who dwelt in Sodom. There were only four of God's people who lived there; but they were to be saved, though their numbers were insignificant. Some messengers were, therefore, sent to give them warning that they might escape with their lives. They were, however, somewhat slow in taking their departure from the doomed city, perceiving which the messengers took them by their hands and hurried them away. We now come to that part of the record which relates the most marvelous manifestation of the Lord's mercy, and so will quote as follows: "Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me (Lot) in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die: behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one: Oh, let me escape thither, (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live. And he said unto him, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken. Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do anything till thou be come thither" (Gen. 19: 19-22). In this narrative we have an example of the marvelous condescension of the Lord to His people; for it was He who was leading them by the hands out of the doomed city, or who was, at least, present and approved of what was done. We learn, too, that a city which was not the permanent home of the refugees, was saved from destruction because they had escaped thither; but beyond all this, let us notice particularly that the Lord when speaking to Lot, urges him to make haste; for He says, "I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither." In this language we find a portrayal of God's care and mercy for His faithful children so affecting that our hearts are won by the greatness of their extent. Think of the judgments of the Almighty being withheld because of His regard for less than half a dozen of His saints! Is it not astonishing that the God of heaven should wait for a few righteous mortals to escape from a neighborhood before His vengeance could be executed on the wicked? How unappreciated are the condescension and mercy of our Lord even by those who try to love

and understand Him! Yet this is the Being whom many revile as unfeeling and cruel; and multitudes fail to love though the beauty and tenderness of His character are so evident.

(TO BE CONTINUED).

KEEP YOUR WORD.

You can make your word with every man as good as your bond. It is said of Grover Cleveland that when he gave his word a man could build on it. If you keep your word once given you become a magnet that will draw strong men your way.

Keep your word.

You who are a parent—keep your word with your children; you who are an employer—keep your word with your employees; you who are an employee—keep your word with your employer; you who have friends keep your word with them and you will keep them.

Keep your word.

When you have an appointment—keep it promptly. When you say you will pay a man—pay him. Never give your word unless you are certain that you can keep it.

Keep your word.

The most important thing you can do is to keep your word with yourself. Never think or say to yourself that you will do a thing without going ahead and doing it. Do but this and you need have no worry about other people taking you at your word.

Keep your word.—GEORGE MATTHEW ADAMS.

TO THE RELIEF SOCIETY.

BELOVED SISTERS:

As we are now just entering the New Year, 1914, it seems an appropriate time, as it certainly is a pleasant duty, to wish you a happy and prosperous year, coupled with the hope that you, with us, will try to make it the very best year that has ever yet transpired for the Relief Society, as well as for ourselves, our families and our kindred.

We are keenly sensible of and grateful for your faithfulness and diligence in the years that are past. But we also know that we learn by doing; and we believe that your past experiences have given you such knowledge of the work that you are now better qualified than ever before to attain to excellence in all that pertains to our great calling. These experiences qualify you for improvement in the greater undertakings that now loom up before the society. These are of such value and magnitude that we cannot afford to let them pass. Rich opportunities are offered for us

to put forth our best efforts; we are encouraged to strive for the advancement of all that is noblest and best, and should exert the utmost diligence in the wide field of spiritual culture, thus making sure of the satisfaction that comes from ministering to those in need of kindly deeds and the sweet charity that never faileth. The Savior is our pattern and guide; and if we follow His example and teaching we cannot fail to meet with His favor and approbation.

The education our sisters receive in the Relief Society is valuable beyond price. It embraces many things not taught in colleges. We know whereof we speak when we assert that the Relief Society, even back in the past, long before we had the many advantages we have at present, was a better source of higher education and benefit to those who were faithful in its service and in the duties and obligations connected with it, than any or all other agencies within their reach. The Relief Society has given to its members a lofty sense of honor and a true conception of the duties pertaining to the activities of life and its value—all in such sweet simplicity that every one could comprehend—through the spirit of our religion, pure and undefiled. And we maintain that no school of philosophy could have taught so successfully as has our society, the science of true charity and good fellowship to women of different nations and different temperaments, or could have created the love and union that have existed in the society throughout the Church of which our sisters in this organization are for the most part faithful members.

We trust our sisters will not think we indulge in a spirit of boasting. We have no such thought. But having been acquainted with the movement for many years, and having personally known and labored with all the former leaders who championed Relief Society work from its very beginning, we feel impressed by the dignity of this, the first woman's organization in the Church, and would like to awaken those who are indifferent to its significance as a school of spiritual and moral advancement. As the years roll on, still greater achievements will be reached by those who shall be identified as members with this society. We feel perfectly sure that this will come to pass. The assurance of its solidarity is the harmony that has existed and does exist between its members in whatsoever land they may be, or whence they may have come. The material growth and enterprise manifested during the past year seem in our estimation to have surpassed the showing of any year in our history. But we must not be content with the progress made, we must strive for more. We must each of us seek for an increase of faith in our heavenly Father, and in the gospel that has been restored in this day and age. We must be careful of our example in all that pertains to our conduct and to our conversation and lives. We must not only look to the material well-being of our own households, but must see to it that in the manners and

customs of our homes and families we may be examples worthy of imitation. There is much to look forward to in the coming year. Let us never lose sight of the high calling to which we have been chosen, and set apart. Let us seek to excel in all the virtues that pertain to our work in charity, benevolence, purity and uprightness, in our own lives, in order that we may worthily seek out the needy and unfortunate and stand firm as the "Rock of Ages" for the truths we have embraced—setting an example in all things great and small, of which we never need be ashamed.

And now, beloved sisters, in closing, accept this expression of our love and commendation for the great and good work you have accomplished, not only in the past year, but in all the years you have labored. Rest assured that you will in no wise lose your reward. May our Father in heaven bless you and yours, and prosper your endeavors in whatever you undertake in the interest of the society, and the enlightenment and benefit of those with whom you labor.

"Cast your bread upon the waters, and it will return after many days."

Faithfully yours,

EMMELINE B. WELLS,
CLARISSA S. WILLIAMS,
JULINA L. SMITH.

—*Woman's Exponent.*

EVIL COMPANIONS.

EVIL companions are the devil's agents, whom he sends abroad into the world to debauch virtue and to advance his kingdom; and by these ambassadors he effects more than he could do in his own person. His own shape and appearance would fright rather than allure; and, well as men like sin, did they see the father of it, they would not be very fond of being his children; but acting in the children of disobedience, which are of the same flesh and blood with us, and creatures of the same shape, and from which we have no aversion, but rather sometimes a great affection to, the bait is easily swallowed. These are his factors, and by these he draws men into eternal darkness. By these he picks up all the good seed that is sown in us, and infuses bad qualities into our better part. These laugh men into destruction and damn them in kindness. These fawn men into misery, and tickle them into an eternity of torments. These turn religion into jests, and make the precepts of the gospel matter of raillery. These are true devils, that delight in the murder of souls, and, sinking into the bottomless pit, pull down their adherents with them.—SELECTED.

"CHEERFULNESS and content are great beautifiers, and are famous preservers of youthful looks."—DICKENS.

FROM THE MISSION FIELD

Appointment.—Elder Arthur L. Beeley of the Liverpool conference has been appointed to succeed Elder Fred R. Woolley as emigration clerk of the European mission.

Releases and Departures.—On February 12th, 1914, Lewis Jones, an honorably released misssionary, who labored in the British mission, took passage on the s.s. *Cedric* for New York; and on the 14th, of the same month, Elder Fred R. Woolley, who labored in the Liverpool Office and was honorably released, sailed for Halifax, Nova Scotia, per s.s. *Alsatian.*

PRAY FOR FRIENDS.

"If thou shouldst never see my face again,
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, *let thy voice*
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats,
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer,
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God."

SELECTED.

DIED.

HUTTON.—At Glasgow (Scottish conference), January 29th, 1914, Katherine Kirk Hutton, aged 78 years. Deceased was the mother of Sister James Hood, and while not a member of the Church, was always very kind to our elders. We feel we have lost a very dear friend, but will long remember her many kindnesses.

MURRAY.—At Glasgow (Scottish conference), February 9th, 1914, William Sherriff Murray. Deceased was born September 6th, 1883, and was baptized September 10th, 1910, by Elder James Brown. Brother Murray always had a glad welcome for the elders, and died a faithful Latter-day Saint.

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